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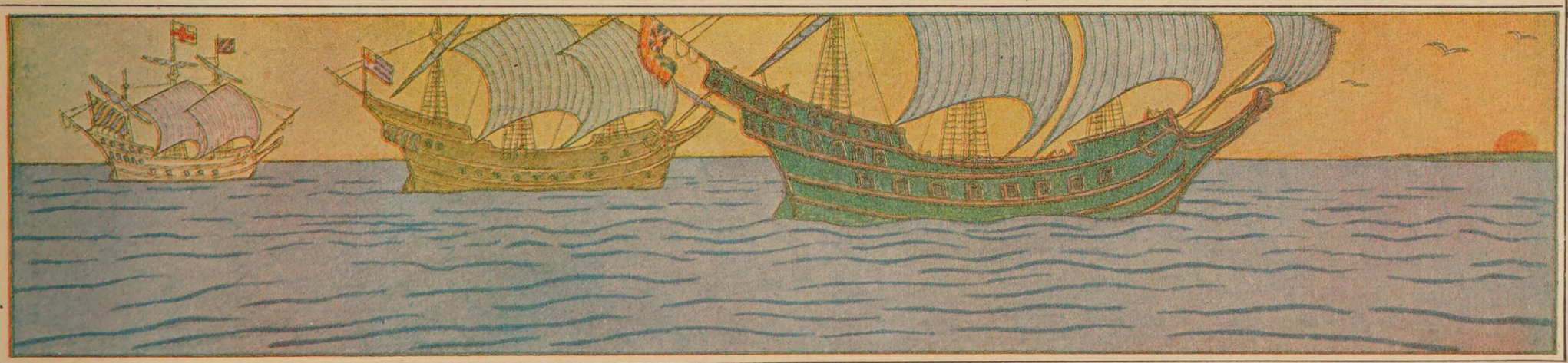
THE STORY OF POCAHONTAS AND CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

TOLD AND PICTURED BY E. BOYD SMITH

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK



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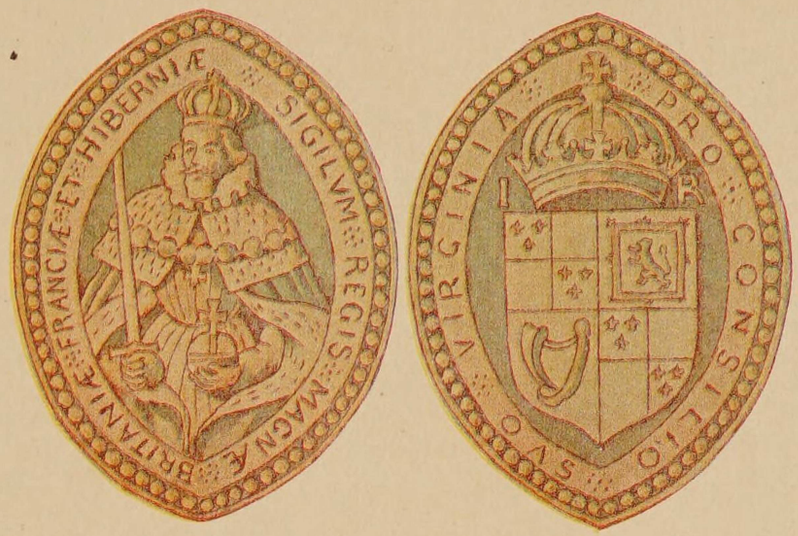

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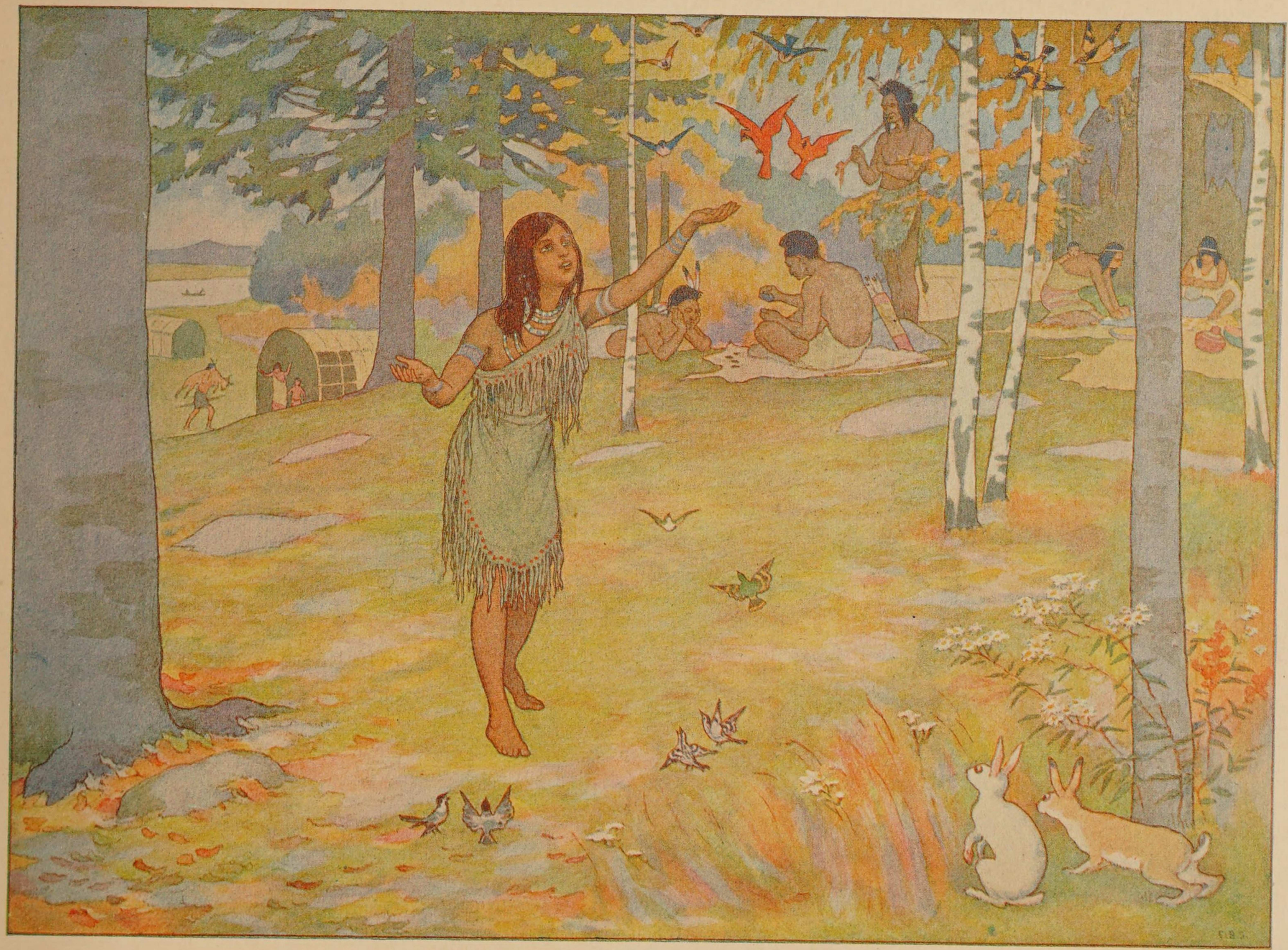
THE STORY OF POCAHONTAS AND CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

1. POCAHONTAS

Long, long ago, when the Indians owned the land, there lived in Virginia, near the river afterwards called the James, a little girl, the Princess Pocahontas, daughter of the great chief Powhatan.

Pocahontas was her father's favorite child, and the pet of the whole tribe; even the fierce warriors loved her sunny ways.

She was a child of nature, and the birds trusted her and came at her call. She knew their songs, and where they built their nests. So she roamed the woods, and learned the ways of all the wild things, and grew to be a care-free maiden.



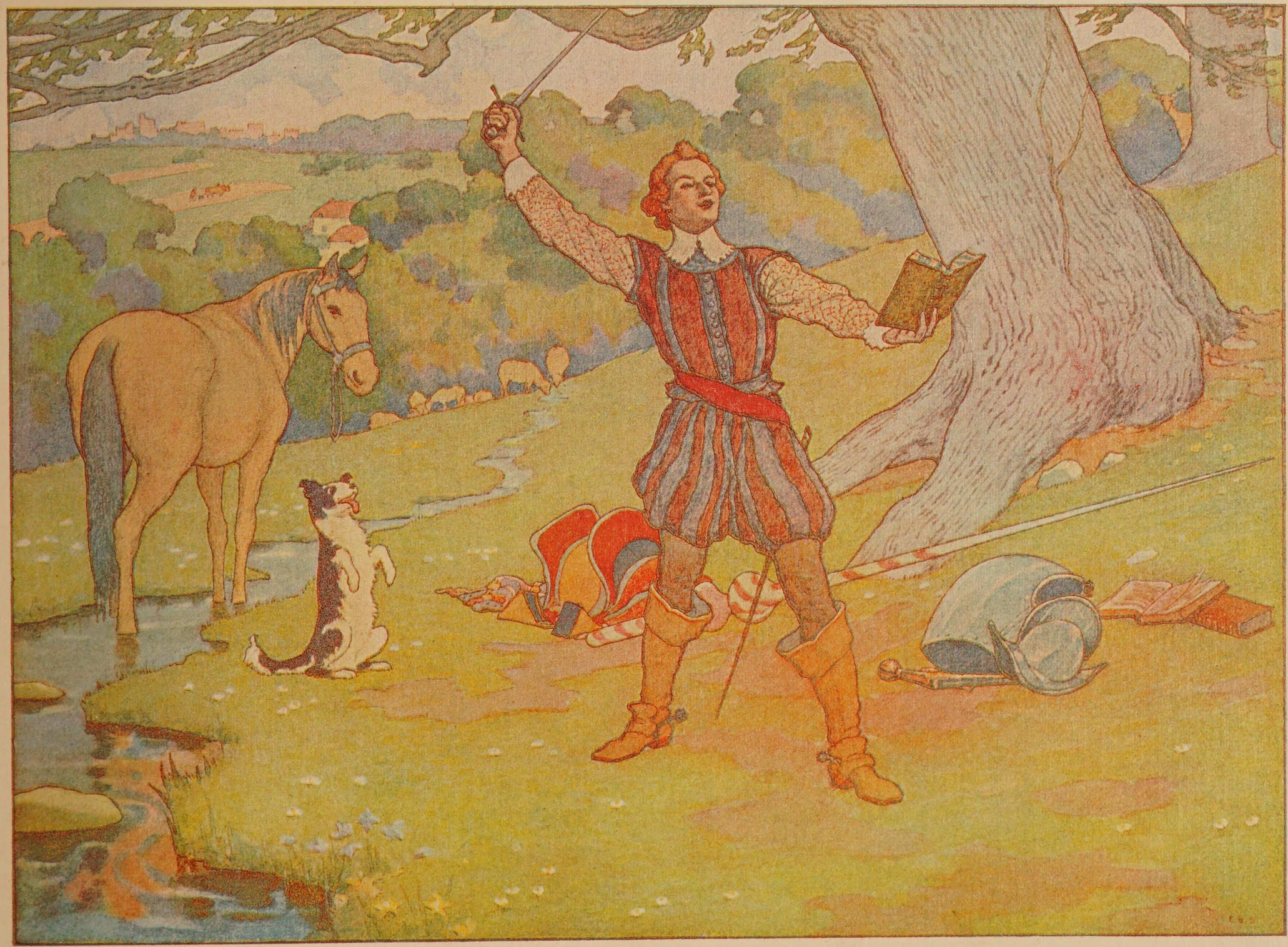
2. JOHN SMITH

In far-away England was a doughty youth, John Smith, who dreamed of battle and adventure. Though but a boy, he had already fought as a soldier in the wars of France, and later in Flanders.

And these two, the wild little Indian girl and the warrior boy, now so far apart, in time were to meet and become great friends.

At home again in Lincolnshire after dangerous travels, the youth still longed for the strife and glory of the fray.

He retired to a quiet spot in the wood, and lived in a camp of his own making, where he read tales of war and knights-errant, and in his enthusiasm fought imaginary enemies. At last he could bear dreaming no longer, and started off again to roam the world in search of adventure.



3. HOW CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH WON HIS SPURS

He journeyed across France to join the armies fighting the Turks, but was robbed on the way by false companions, and suffered much hardship. At last he reached Marseilles, where he took ship with a party of pilgrims going to the East. A great storm arising, the pilgrims superstitiously blamed him for it, and threw him overboard. By good fortune he was able to swim to a small island, whence he was soon rescued by a Breton ship. He stayed for some time on this ship, taking part in a sea fight with a Venetian vessel, and received, after the victory, a share of the spoils.

Now, with money again in his pocket, he wandered through Italy, and then crossed over to Styria. Here he joined the army of the Emperor Rudolph and was appointed captain of a company of cavalry, and did good service.

During the siege of the town of Regal, the Turks, who held it, challenged any captain among the besiegers to come out and fight one of their champions.

Captain John Smith was chosen to meet the Turk, and on a field before the town they fought, and the Turk was beaten and lost his head. On the next day another Turk challenged the victor and was also overthrown. And then came still a third, who, after a desperate battle, met the same fate as the other two. For this brave service Prince Sigismund gave the Captain a coat-of-arms with three Turks' heads as the device. And thus Captain John Smith won his spurs.

But after this he was less fortunate, for, being wounded, he was taken prisoner by the Turks and made a slave. In time, however, he escaped and fled to Russia, and from thence at last found his way home to England again.

E.B.S.

4. STRANGE TALES OF A STRANGE PEOPLE

Meanwhile Pocahontas, now grown to be a girl of some twelve years, often listened eagerly to the stories of the old men of her tribe, who, on these warm spring days, sat and smoked together, and told of the things they had done and seen long ago. Some remembered a white-faced people who, nearly twenty years before, had come to Roanoke Island from no one knew where, — men with yellow hair, dressed from head to foot in cumbrous garments, and bearing wonderful weapons which spat out fire, with much noise. Many believed them gods, while others thought they were devils. And Pocahontas listened in wonder, ever curious to hear of this strange people so unlike her own. The old priest mournfully prophesied that the strangers, being of some mighty race, would come again from out the great waters and overrun the whole land.

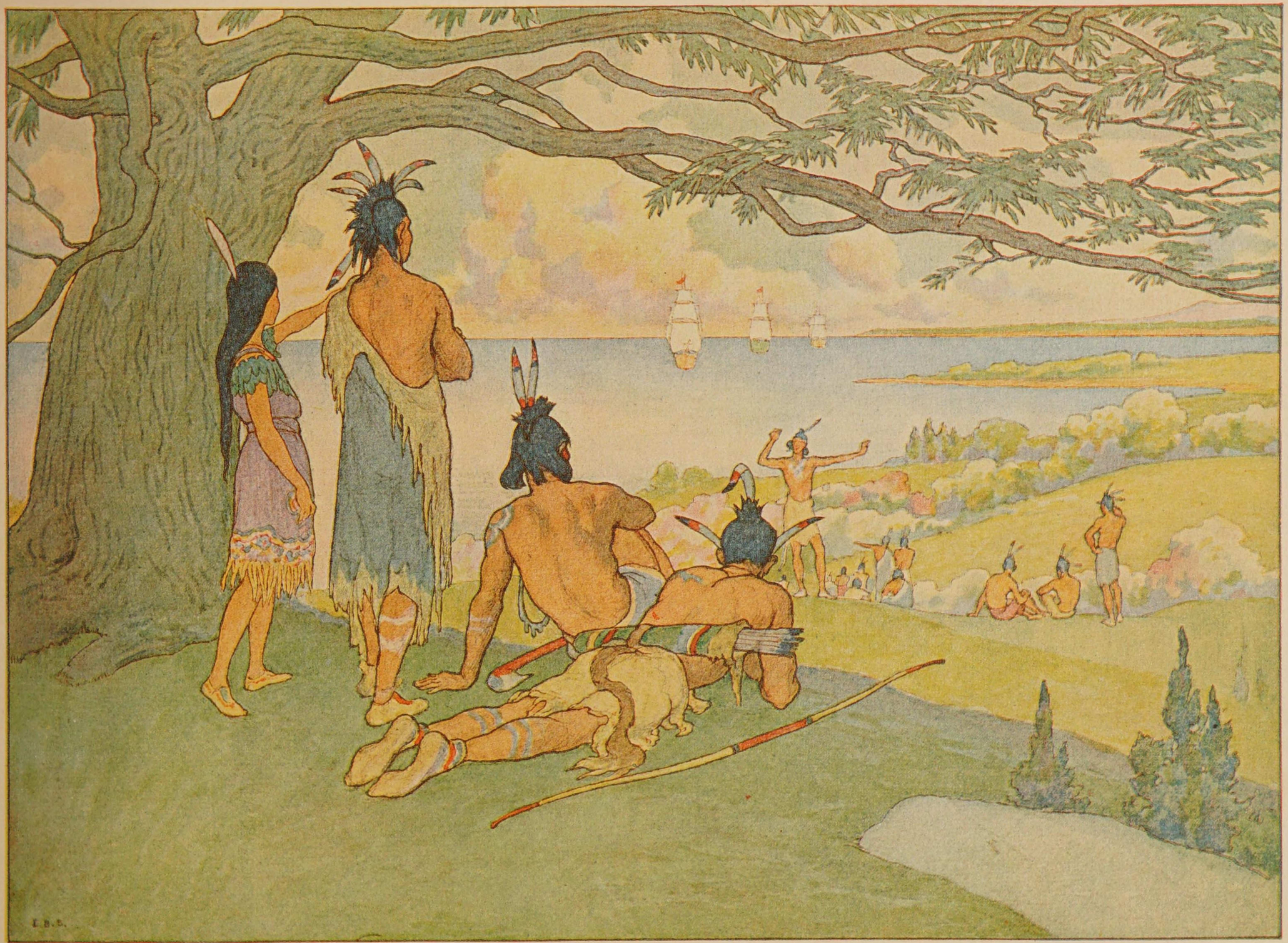
E.B.S.

5. THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

And scarcely had he spoken when it seemed that his warning had come true, for runners, wildly excited, cried out that a fleet of mighty winged canoes had been seen afar on the ocean, advancing like great clouds.

Then Pocahontas, with many of her people, hurried to the hills, and there, overlooking the sea, they saw in truth three strange craft slowly sailing up the bay.

These were the ships from England, bringing a new colony, a band of pioneers, and adventurers in search of gold, to take possession of the broad lands of America.



6. THE LANDING OF THE COLONISTS — 1607

That night the ships dropped anchor in the bay. On the morrow the colonists disembarked, and Captain Gosnold, their leader, claimed the land in the king's name. Among the first, as one of the Council, was Captain John Smith, who had again left home in quest of adventure and glory, this time in the new world. To the eyes of the weary travelers, after their long voyage across the sea, Virginia, on that bright April day, seemed a land of promise. With great hopes and renewed courage they set to work to build the town which they called Jamestown, in honor of their king, — a town which lives to this day.

But after a time they grew dissatisfied, for they failed to find the gold mines they had hoped for. And they became discouraged, and quarreled, and things began to go ill with them.

To make matters worse Captain Gosnold after a few months sickened and died.

7. THE AMBUSH

Fortunately for the good of the colonists, who had completely lost heart and were anxious to give up the undertaking, Captain John Smith soon became their leader. Ever active and enterprising, he inspired the others by his example. He vigorously put things in order, and set the idlers to work to complete their half-finished houses, and to build the forts to protect them from the Indians, who now showed a warlike spirit.

Next he went off to explore the country, and to trade with the natives for corn, for the settlers began to lack food.

On one of these expeditions, when he had gone ashore with an Indian guide, a band of hostile braves, who had been on the watch among the trees, lay in wait to attack him, led by Opekankano, Pocahontas's uncle, while he, unconscious of their presence, gave orders to his men to stay by the boat and keep a sharp lookout for danger.

E.B.S.

8. BATTLE WITH THE INDIANS

Suddenly, in the heart of the deep woods, the stealthy redskins sprang upon him, shrieking like fierce beasts of prey. And in a moment the arrows flew thick and fast.

Captain John, though taken unawares, made a brave fight, gravely wounding two of his enemies with his pistols, and protecting himself from the arrows by holding his Indian guide in front of him, as a buckler.

But there were too many against him, and as he could not beat them off he tried to retreat to the boat, always shielding himself with the guide. Unfortunately, just as escape seemed near, he stumbled into a swamp and was held fast by the heavy bog, and chilled by the cold water. Being thus helpless he was forced to surrender, and the triumphant Indians seized him as their prisoner.

9. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH A PRISONER

At first they decided to kill him at once, then some thought it better to lead him to their village, that the whole tribe might rejoice in the triumph. But, as one of the Indians shot by the Captain had in the meantime died, the more impatient clamored for speedy vengeance. So they bound him to a tree to use as a target.

Now, as the arrows began to strike dangerously near, Captain John, ever quick-witted and resourceful, brought forth his pocket compass and showed the Indians the dancing needle; and when they found they could not touch it, because of the glass, they were amazed, for of course they had never seen glass before, and could not understand it. A feeling of awe crept over them; they thought him a magician, and were afraid to kill him. So at last they marched him off in their midst, through the forest, to consult with the rest of the tribe as to what should be done with him.

10. THE DANCE OF VICTORY

They carried their prisoner from village to village, while at every moment he looked for death, until at last they came to their great town, Werowacomo, where king Powhatan lived. And here they celebrated their victory by savage pomps and conjurations. They tied the Captain to the ceremonial stake, then, all painted and decorated in their fiercest and most hideous war paint and trappings, they danced their wild dance of triumph. Shouting and jumping, they brandished their war clubs in his face, whirling round and round their captive, like so many demons, each more frightful than the other. But, since they did not kill him at once, Captain John, nothing daunted, kept them wondering, by telling strange stories of the sun, the stars, and the world over the sea, and though the Indians could understand but little they hesitated, one day feasting him, and the next threatening to kill.

Now Pocahontas felt sorry for the handsome young stranger, and was drawn to him, and taught him many words of the Indian tongue, and he told her of his people beyond the sea, as best he could, and so they became good friends.

11–12. POCAHONTAS SAVES CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH'S LIFE

At last, after long deliberation, the Indians decided that, since he had killed one of their tribe, Captain John must die, for this was their law. So they dragged him, bound, before the great chief Powhatan, who sat in mighty state surrounded by his warriors. They stretched the prisoner on the ground with his head on a large stone, to beat out his brains with their cruel clubs. And it seemed as though at last the gallant Captain's time had come. But just as the Indian brave was about to strike, his great war club swinging high in the air, Pocahontas rushed forward and threw herself between him and his victim. With her own body she shielded the Captain from harm, for her heart was moved to pity for the stranger, and she could not bear that he should die. And now aroused, with flashing eyes she waved the executioner back. Then she pleaded with her father that the captive's life be spared.

At once there was wild confusion of shouting and threatening, many crying, "Kill, kill!" while but few were willing to

spare his life, for the Indians feared the white men, and wished to drive them from the land.

But Pocahontas, as Princess of the tribe, claimed her right, and would not yield them up their victim. Then Powhatan, who ruled them all, raised his hand and stopped their clamor. In sullen silence the angry warriors awaited his decision. For a moment he hesitated, and the fate of Captain John hung wavering in the balance. Then, to please his favorite daughter, whom he dearly loved, he decreed that she should have her will.

"Let Pocahontas keep the stranger as her own, to make her toys," he said, for Captain John, during the idle days of weary captivity, had often whittled curious playthings for the little maid.

And thus was Captain John Smith's life saved by the gentle Indian girl, and with it the Jamestown colony, for without their sturdy and resourceful leader the settlers would have lost courage and abandoned the town.

E.B.S.

13. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH AGAIN FREE

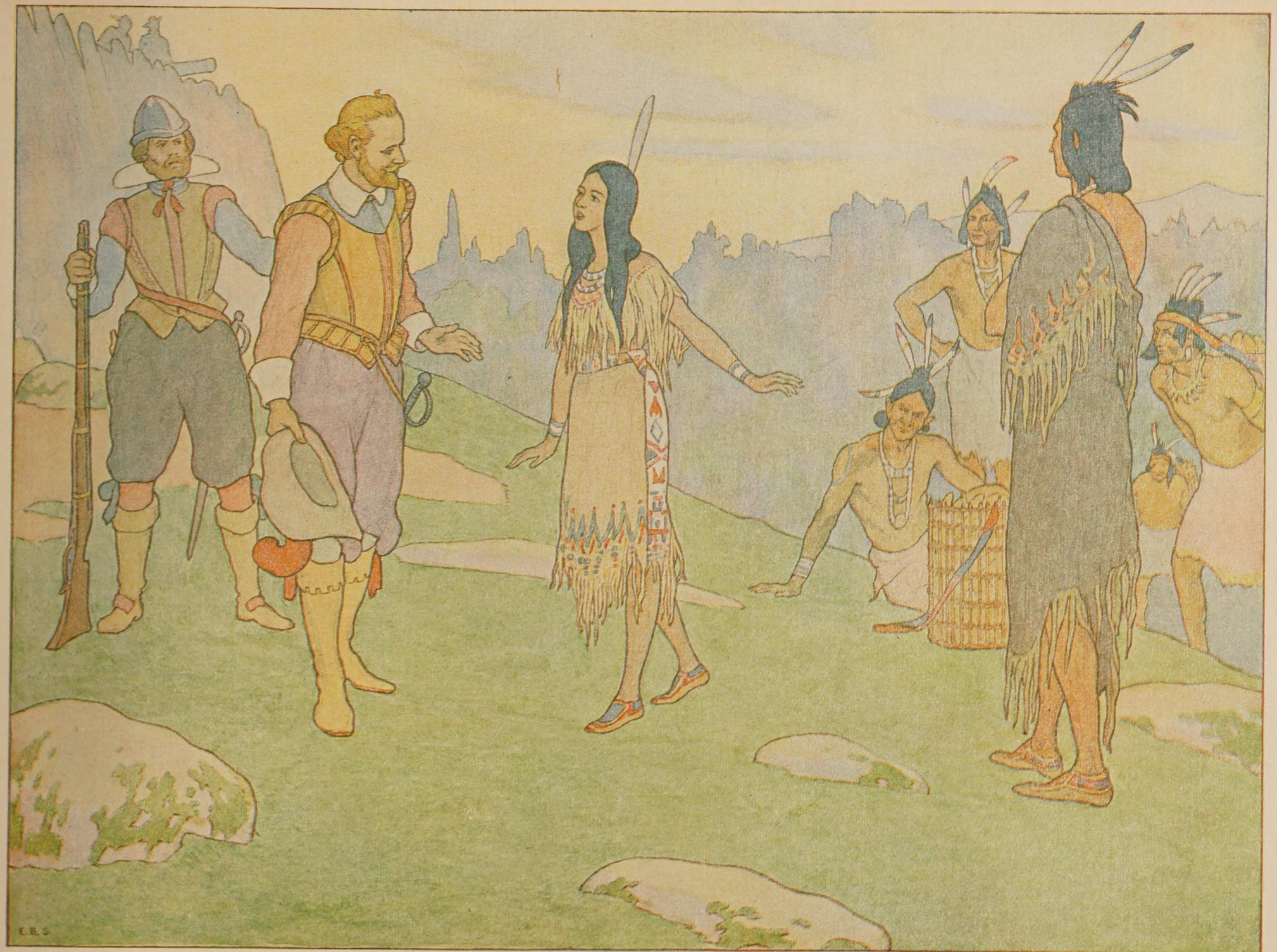
Now, after much feasting, and with savage rite and ceremony, Powhatan adopted the Captain into the tribe, and made him a chief, and told him that he might come and go in safety, as one of them; then gave him guides to take him back to Jamestown, that the red man and the white should henceforth be friends, since Pocahontas willed it so.

And Captain John thanked the maiden for the great service she had done him, and, like a gallant knight of old, bent his knee and kissed her hand as he bade her good-by.

Once again in Jamestown, he found the colony in disorder and panic. All were on the point of sailing for home, completely disheartened, for they thought him dead, and feared the Indians. But again he put life into the enterprise, and set the faint-hearted to work, freed from the fear of Indian attack, since Pocahontas stood his friend.

14. POCAHONTAS BRINGS FOOD TO THE COLONISTS

Later, when the settlers were in sore straits for food, for they were improvident, and managed badly, Pocahontas, always generous and friendly, learning of their needs, came with her brother Nantaquaus and her Indians bringing corn, and kept them from starving, while their own was growing. Captain John in return gave her beads and trinkets to deck herself, and called her his child, and a firm friendship grew between them. Often she came and went, bringing peace and welcome food, quite at home in the little streets of Jamestown. And Captain John Smith in his writings has said that without her help in times of dire need, and without her influence for peace, the feeble colony must surely have perished, either by famine or by the hands of her savage kindred. Much we owe to the Indian maid who helped so greatly in the early struggles of the founders of this great nation.



15. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH GOES IN SEARCH OF CORN

This pleasant state, however, did not last, for, as the settlers became more firmly fixed in the land, the Indians, fickle and changeable, grew jealous and resented their intrusion, and refused to sell corn, hoping by this means to force them away.

Once when Captain John Smith was compelled to go to them in search of food in the dead of winter, and to break his way through the ice of the frozen river, they received him coldly, with lowering looks, and only Pocahontas bade him welcome.

Finally Powhatan joined the discontented, and plotted to destroy Captain John and his friends by treachery.

16. POCAHONTAS'S WARNING

To carry out his plan the crafty chief proposed to the Captain that, as now they were all friends, he and his party should leave their weapons in the boat. He hoped thus to attack the white men while they were unarmed.

But Captain John was too cautious a soldier to agree to this, and answered that, since, as Powhatan had well said, they were all friends, there could be no harm in keeping their guns with them, as the settlers considered them a part of their dress. Then Powhatan planned to surprise them by night. But, just as his trap was well laid, Pocahontas, risking her own life, stole silently through the deep woods in the dark, cold night, to the Captain's tent, and, with tears in her eyes, warned him of his danger, urging him to fly.

Thus forewarned he was on his guard, and, with his soldiers, beat back his enemies when they came, and even forced them to bring the much needed corn, by threatening to destroy their village.

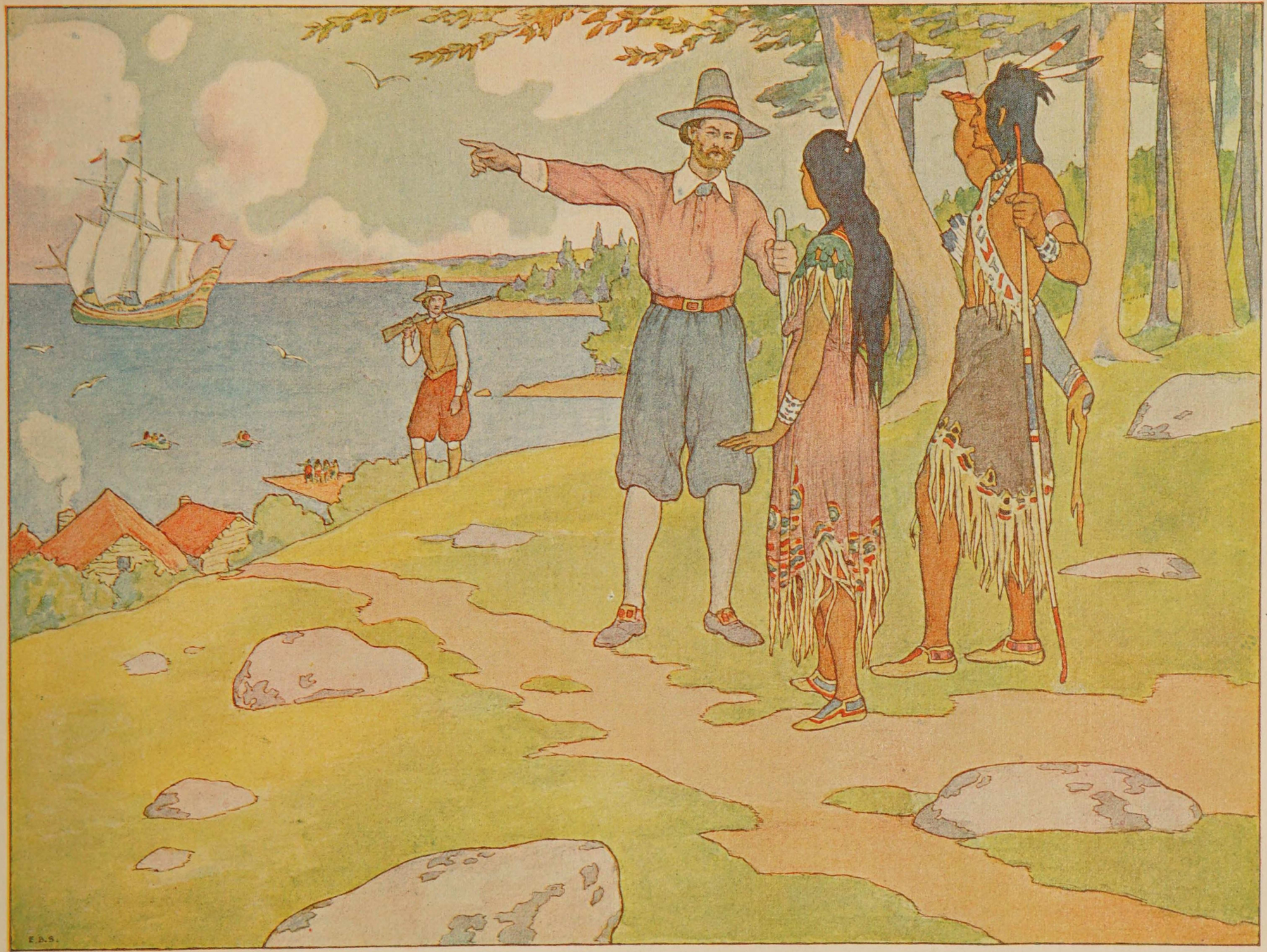
And so Pocahontas saved Captain John Smith's life for the second time.

17. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH SAILS FOR ENGLAND

Always watchful and brave, Captain John Smith worked zealously to make the colony a success. One day, while returning from treating with the Indians for a new and better site for Jamestown, he was seriously injured by the accidental explosion of a bag of gunpowder in his boat. His clothes were set on fire and he had to throw himself into the river to escape being burned to death.

His wounds were so grievous that he could no longer govern the colony, and was forced to sail for England, in a ship just leaving, to seek the help of a surgeon.

On that day Pocahontas, having heard of the accident, came to the town with Nantaquaus, to see him. They were only in time to watch the ship bearing Captain John sail away toward the open sea. Pocahontas little dreamed that years would pass before they should meet again.



18. POCAHONTAS IS CAPTURED BY ARGALL

From this day, having lost their leader, things went badly with the Jamestown colonists, for the dissatisfied Indians, no longer fearing the heavy hand of Captain John Smith, attacked the settlers, and caused them serious losses.

And Pocahontas came no more, but waited for his coming again,and waited in vain. So time passed, and at last she heard that he was dead, for this was the rumor in the land. And she grieved deeply, and sat often alone thinking of him, for she had grown to love her warrior Captain. Some two years after Captain John's departure, came Argall, an unscrupulous man, who plotted to capture Pocahontas and hold her as a hostage, to keep the fighting savages quiet. With the help of two treacherous Indians she was induced to come on board his ship, and once there was seized and held prisoner.

Powhatan mourned his daughter's loss, and tried to ransom her, but the crafty Argall would not give her up.

E.B.S.

19. THE MARRIAGE OF POCAHONTAS

She was never allowed to go back to her people, though Nantaquaus came often to see her at Jamestown. And here she grew to be a woman, and learned the ways of the English women, and dressed as they did.

At last a young Englishman, John Rolfe, captivated by her dark beauty and gentle ways, wooed the Indian maid, and as years had passed since Captain John had gone away, and she had long since thought him dead, she listened to Rolfe, and consented to marry him, that peace might reign between her people and the white men.

So they were married in the Jamestown church, and Nantaquaus and a body of chiefs from her tribe, as well as all the settlers, came to the wedding. There was great joy in the town, for now the colonists felt that a good understanding with the Indians was at last established. And Pocahontas, as before, was the tie that bound them.

E.B.S.

20. THE LANDING OF POCAHONTAS IN ENGLAND

After this the colony prospered. Pocahontas became contented with her life in the town. And in time a son was born to her. Later, Rolfe, with his wife and child, sailed to visit England. Pocahontas marveled much at the extent of the great sea, and the many ships upon its waves.

When they arrived at Plymouth the governor of the town came down to bid the Indian Princess welcome to England.

With her, as attendant, went Uttamatomakkin, a shrewd old chief, who, in his war feathers and Indian robes, attracted much attention. He had been sent by Powhatan to count the English, that he might learn their strength. And he was to cut a notch in a stick for every man he saw. He worked hard and fast, but a whole bundle of sticks was notched before he got even to London, where, with a disgusted grunt, he gave up the task. "Too many," he said.

E.B.S.

21–22. POCAHONTAS AT THE COURT OF JAMES THE FIRST

Pocahontas's stay in England became almost a triumphal march. Everywhere she was received with great honor as a foreign Princess, and entertained with banquets and receptions, and taken to the theatres to see the plays.

Finally she was presented at court by Lord and Lady Delaware, and formally welcomed with great pomp and ceremony by King James and his queen, surrounded by their following of lords and ladies, all arrayed in their rich costumes of state. And none of the haughty ladies was prouder or more stately than the Indian bride. Throughout London town her welcome was the same. The people were curious to see this dark Princess from another world. And even the high bishops, and the great lords and ladies, came down in their stately coaches to visit her at her house in Branford.

21–22. POCAHONTAS AT THE COURT OF JAMES THE FIRST

To compliment her, many taverns and inns were named "La Belle Sauvage," a name still to be found on old London signs.

And as she had done so much to help the struggling English colonists across the sea, all wished to show their gratitude by greetings, and festivals in her honor. Old Uttamatomakkin received his share of attention as well. In his wild dress, with his tawny skin and shining black hair, he was a strange sight to those who had never before seen a red American. He was not at all impressed by the king and his richly dressed nobles, and wondered how they could endure so many clothes, and greatly preferred his own simple dress, made from the skins of the wild beasts of his forests.

E. B. B.

23. THE MEETING OF POCAHONTAS AND CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

And now Captain John Smith, who, during all this time, had been on long voyages of exploration and adventure, hearing that Pocahontas had come to England, remembered the old times and all that the little Indian maid had done for him, and so, attended by some friends, he went down to Branford to greet her. When Pocahontas saw him a flood of recollection overcame her, and she was greatly moved. She turned from him, hiding her face in her hand, and for a long time could not speak. At last she said, "They told me you were dead."

Then she reproached him for calling her the Lady Rebecca, the name given her since her marriage, and told him that he should call her child, as he used to do, and said, "You did promise Powhatan what was yours should be his, and he the like to you: you called him father, being in his land a stranger, and by the same reason so must I do you."

But Captain John excused himself, saying, "I durst not now allow of that title, since the King commands that you be treated as a Princess."

Then Pocahontas answered, "You were not afraid to come into my father's country, and to cause fear in him and all his people but me, and fear you here I should call you father? I tell you then I will, and you shall call me child. And so I will be forever and ever your countryman."

And then, when Pocahontas had grown calmer, these two, after years of separation, again sat together, and talked long of the old days in Virginia.

Uttamatomakkin, glad to see an old friend in this strange land, told how he had been commanded by Powhatan to seek out Captain John, to know the truth, if he still lived, for they could not believe all the rumors they heard concerning him.

24. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH GOES TO SEA AGAIN

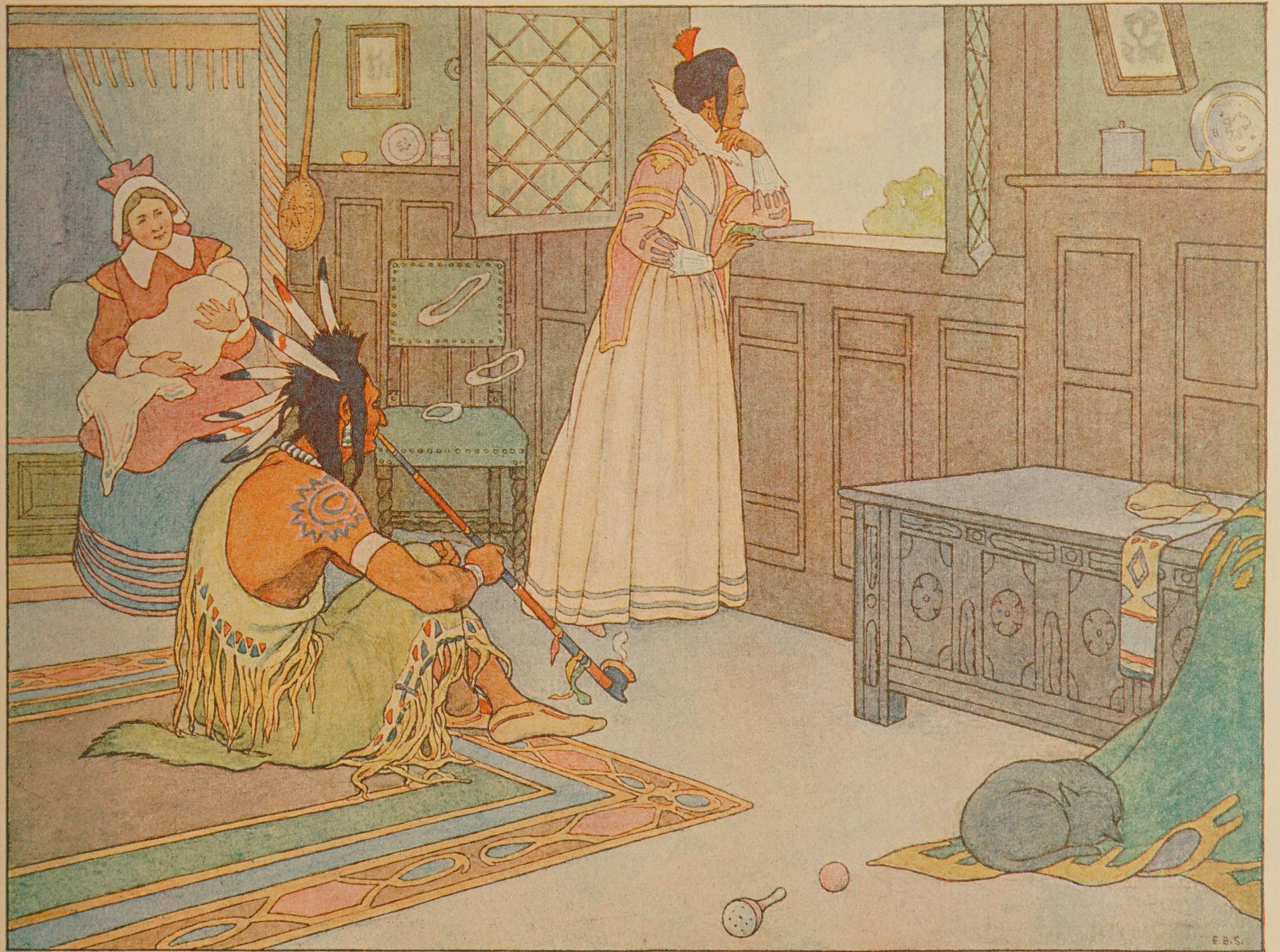
After this meeting Captain John became more restless than ever, and soon set sail again. And when alone upon the deck of his ship he thought often of the Virginia colony for which he had toiled, and risked so much, and of Pocahontas, and of her help in his time of need. No doubt he saw again before him the little Indian girl who had saved his life, and the maid who brought him succor, and, when the time came, saved him once more by her warning. And his heart was warmed with gratitude, and he wished her happiness in her new life. But always for him ambition and action called. So he sailed away to help found new colonies, this time to that part of America which he named New England, and where he opened the way for the Pilgrim Fathers, who afterwards built a new Plymouth in the new world. From Jamestown and Plymouth other colonies spread along the coast, until in time they joined hands and formed a new nation, the United States of America.

25. POCAHONTAS LONGS FOR HOME

When Captain John had gone, the thoughts of Pocahontas more than ever turned toward home, and she wearied of the crowded English land, and longed for her native forests again. Daily she gazed from her window toward the west, where lay Virginia, and her early life. And she pined, and thought much of the old days in her native wilds, when into her sunny life came the golden-haired stranger, with his people, and of the great changes that had befallen her and her race through that coming.

She often talked with old Uttamatomakkin of Virginia, and of Captain John, and grew more and more homesick, till her husband became alarmed lest she fall ill from longing, and he tried to hasten their departure. They journeyed down to Gravesend, where their ship was lying, but were compelled to wait while it took on supplies for Jamestown.

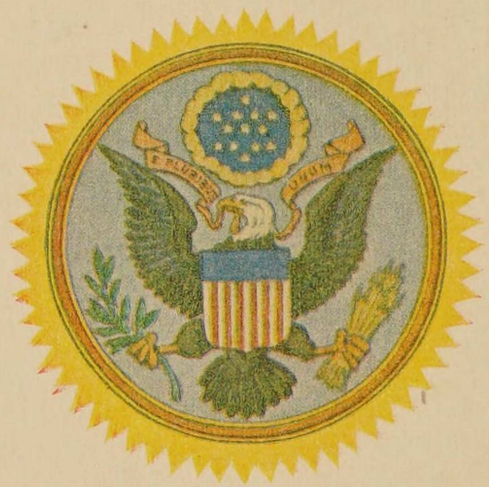
At last, however, the good news was brought that the ship was ready. Preparations were quickly made for the long voyage, and the day was set.


E.B.S.

26. THE END OF THE STORY OF POCAHONTAS

Though the ship lay ready in the offing, and the sailors had come to convey them on board, and though at last Pocahontas had turned her face toward home, alas! it was not to be. A sudden weakness overcame her, and gently, looking toward the setting sun and Virginia, she quietly fell asleep,—to rest forever in a foreign land.

From her son, who years after returned to the land of his birth, many proud families still trace their descent. As long as Virginia lives her name will be dear to that state. And for us all, who have inherited this great land, this first page of a nation's history, the story of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith, with its echo of primitive days, its romance and dangers, its daring courage and perseverance, will always mean more than simply a tale of adventure of the little Indian girl and the gallant soldier.



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